



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the humanities?

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, “The term ‘humanities’ includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.”

I do not see my project idea represented in the list of Collection and Format Types, Research Fields, and Topics. Does this mean that my project is not eligible?

No. The list is not exhaustive or comprehensive. We welcome well-constructed projects across a variety of disciplines, as long as they advance the preservation of and/or access to cultural heritage collections.

Is completion of a Tier I grant project a prerequisite for requesting a Tier II grant?

No. You do not have to progress from a Tier I grant to a Tier II grant. But Tier II projects should always be based on sound planning and preliminary research. Support for that planning might come from NEH, from other federal or foundation grants, or from an institution’s own funds.

I have a Tier I project that will not scale to a larger implementation project. Can I still apply?

Yes. Tier I projects do not have to involve planning or preliminary research for a larger project. They may instead conduct a stand-alone study or experiment that contributes to the field. NEH welcomes discrete projects to conduct a case study or survey, or to develop a tool or undertake basic research. A proposal must demonstrate how the project advances knowledge in cultural heritage preservation and access.

Am I required to provide a separate dissemination plan for my project?

Tier II projects are required to submit a separate one- to two-page dissemination plan. Since Tier II projects support the development of standards, practices, methodologies, and workflows or applied research, they must be well received by the relevant professional community. Your dissemination strategy must be coordinated with your project's work plan and budget. Tier I projects may also elect to include a separate dissemination plan, but they are not required to do so.

The guidelines refer to “interdisciplinary teams.” What do you mean by this, and what constitutes the right kinds of disciplines?

Many project teams will include members from humanities disciplines and from other fields such as preservation and information, computer, and natural science. The exact mix of specialists will obviously depend on the particular nature of the project. While NEH strongly encourages projects that bring together participants from various backgrounds, and expects applicants to explain how their project results will be broadly significant, you must also articulate the direct benefits that your project will have for humanities work, including research, educational programming, or public programming. In short, your project team should embody a well-defined humanities perspective that can frame your objectives and guide the project to successful completion. Such a perspective may be provided by members of an advisory committee, consultant(s), a project co-director, or another participant.

Am I required to include a sustainability plan? If so, how do I craft one?

Your application doesn't have to include a separate sustainability plan. However, all applicants must address the sustainability of their project—which includes ensuring long-term access to project data and outcomes—in their narrative. Sustainability may be defined in many different ways (to incorporate, for example, financial, technical, and institutional sustainability), depending on the nature of the project. For projects involving scientific experiments, any data collected must be made accessible, in order to ensure that test results are replicable. In this case, you may find it helpful to format your discussion of sustainability as a data management plan along the lines of what the National Science Foundation and other grantmaking agencies (including NEH) require. (You can find information about the data management plans required by the NEH Office of Digital Humanities for some of its grant programs [here](#).) You must include critical information regarding sustainability in the narrative, but you may also include a data management plan as an appendix. Regardless of the nature of your project, NEH recommends coordinating with a preservation specialist, such as your institutional librarian or archivist or an outside consultant, in planning for sustainability.

Is a separate environmental scan required?

No, but some applicants may find that including an environmental scan as an appendix can help them demonstrate the significance of their project results.

May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for a grant?

NEH does not provide support to foreign institutions or organizations. However, American institutions may apply for cooperative projects involving U.S. and foreign organizations, provided that support is requested primarily for the U.S. portion of the collaborative effort.

Am I prohibited from working with employees from a federally supported institution and using its lab space and equipment?

Not necessarily. In principle, any eligible U.S. nonprofit organization may collaborate with a federal entity, so long as NEH funds do not explicitly support costs related to the federal entity, including, but not limited to, staff salaries, facility costs, materials, and equipment rentals. Applications may be deemed ineligible, however, when a proposed project becomes so closely intertwined with a federal entity that it takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. Should your project involve a federal entity, we recommend contacting a program officer before the deadline to discuss the parameters of the working relationship. We also recommend including with your application a letter of commitment from the federal entity acknowledging the strict separation of federal funds and providing assurance that the project does not take on the characteristics of its own authorized activities. Please note that NEH will make formal decisions regarding the eligibility of applications only *after* the application deadline.

Will NEH accept late applications?

No. To be considered, an application must be received by Grants.gov on or before the June 21, 2016, deadline.

Who will read my grant application?

Specialists and nonspecialists will evaluate your application. Your narrative should therefore explain the project's significance and provide an overview of its methodology in terms that will be understandable to a layman. The narrative should also demonstrate a command of the literature relevant to the project and provide detailed information about the procedures to be used to accomplish the project's goals.

If I receive NEH funding, may I also accept money from other sources?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to seek other financial support. We do ask that you tell us about proposals to other funding sources, so that we can better understand the project's financial picture.

If I am requesting additional NEH funding to continue my project, should I describe the project anew or will evaluators have access to the earlier grant proposal?

NEH treats all applications as new applications. Evaluators will not have access to the previous application; therefore, proposals for renewed funding must discuss the project anew. Be sure to describe the work accomplished with previous NEH funding and be clear about the specific activities and products of the new grant.

What are indirect costs?

These are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be readily assigned to a specific project or activity of an organization. Typical examples of indirect costs are the salaries of executive officers, and the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, local telephone service, office supplies, and accounting and legal services. Indirect costs are computed by applying a negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base (usually the direct costs of the project).

Does an institution's waiving its indirect costs count as a gift for purposes of releasing federal matching funds?

No. Only cash or pledges of cash from disinterested nonfederal third parties can be matched by NEH.

My application for a Research and Development grant was unsuccessful. Is there anything I may do to increase my chances for success next time?

You may request copies of the comments by evaluators. A revised application should take into consideration the issues that they raised. However, a resubmitted application will be reviewed by persons who will not have knowledge of or access to the previous application file.

I have a research project with a digital component. Is Research and Development the most suitable program for my project?

NEH offers several grant opportunities that support digital projects. Research and Development supports new or ongoing investigations in a broadly defined area related to the preservation of—or access to—humanities content, whether in analog or digital format. These projects typically address a problem and propose a solution with far-reaching applications in one or more humanities disciplines or for the cultural heritage community. If your digital project is not centered on preservation or access, or if you have a more narrowly defined interpretive or analytical research agenda, you should consider several other NEH programs: in particular, [Collaborative Research Grants](#), [Digital Humanities Start-up Grants](#), [Digital Humanities Implementation Grants](#), and [Digital Projects for the Public](#). If you are uncertain as to which program is most appropriate for your project, please contact a Preservation and Access program officer (preservation@neh.gov, or 202-606-8570) in advance of submission; he or she can advise you.